

[REDACTED]

The Unchangeableness of God's Cove-
nant, the SAINTS SECURITY.

122
A

S E R M O N

Occasioned by the Decease of the

Rev. Mr. WILLIAM COOMBS,

Who departed this Life *April* the 1st,
1744. Preached at *Limehouse, April*
the 8th.

[REDACTED]

By SAMUEL WILSON. K

[REDACTED]

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(3)

TO THE
Relations *and* Friends
OF THE
DECEASED,
Much Esteemed in the LORD.

IT is not to renew your Grief, but to testify my Respect to our dear departed Brother ; and with a sincere desire, to offer something, for your Instruction and Support, I have been prevail'd with, to put this plain Discourse into your Hands.

We are all dying Creatures, and there is no Consideration I know of more likely to render Death comfortable, than that of an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, a Covenant ordered in all things, and sure.

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That

(4)

*That we may feel the Blessings of it
in our Hearts, stedfastly rest our Souls
on its Security, and live out the Fruits
of it, in an holy, humble Conversation,
till we are made meet to enjoy him who
is the Sum and All of it ; is the earn-
est Desire,*

*Of your Sympathizing Friend,
and Servant in the Lord,*

SAMUEL WILSON.

*Leightonstone,
May 22d, 1744.*



ISAIAH Chap. liv. Ver. 10.

For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.

AT the particular Request of your late worthy Pastor, the Rev. Mr. Coombs, I am to address myself to you on the melancholy Occasion of his decease.

The Words above read, he fix'd on himself as the Subject of his Funeral Discourse; the good Lord grant they may be as useful to you as they were sweet and comfortable to him!

In the foregoing Chapter the Evangelical Prophet under the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, gives us a very lively Description of the Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Triumph of the Son of God, the great *Head* of the Church, the *Friend* and *Surety* of his People.

In this he proceeds to give us an Account of some of the blessed Fruits of his Undertaking in the Call of the Gentiles, and the extraordinary

6 *The Unchangeableness of God's Covenant*, ordinary Glories, which should be put upon the Church, under the Gospel Dispensation.

And as this might seem a very improbable Event, considering the Ignorance, Prejudices, and Superstition, with which for so many Ages they were over-run ; God enters into the most solemn Engagements, that it should certainly take place in the appointed time ; and that when it was fulfilled, and they taken into his Family, he would not forsake them, or give them up any more to reproach.

This, says he, *is as the Waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more go over the Earth : so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the Mountans shall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that bath mercy on thee.*

In which we may observe,

I. An Account given of a *Covenant*, which is ascribed to *God*, and said to be a *Covenant of Peace*.

II. We are informed of the Spring and Source of this *Covenant*, *Kindness* and *Mercy*.

III. A most solemn Assurance of the Stability, Perpetuity, and Unchangeableness of it, *It shall not depart nor be removed.*

IV.

IV. We have the Amplification or farther Illustration of this Security, *This is as the Waters of Noah unto me, and though the Mountains may depart, and the Hills be removed, my Kindness shall not depart, &c.*

We shall attend to these in their Order.

I. We have an Intimation of a Covenant, which is attributed to God, and called a Covenant of Peace, *Neither shall the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord.*

For the better understanding of which it will be necessary to observe, some things concerning *a Covenant in general*; and then to show you why the Scripture always calls it *God's Covenant*, and wherein it is *a Covenant of Peace*.

1st, We are to hint some things concerning a Covenant in general.

And we all know in the common Acceptation of the word a Covenant is an agreement or settlement between two Parties or more, concerning certain things which each has in Possession, as his own, of right; and which the other cannot claim or demand without his Consent first obtain'd; which Consent is founded upon the performance of Conditions agreed on between them. Thus the *Master* has no right to the Labour of the *Servant* but on the foot of Maintenance, or Wages; nor the *Servant* any Claim to the Provision or Hire of the *Master*.

8 *The Unchangeableness of God's Covenant,*
Master, any farther than he performs the Duty
agreed on, to be discharged by him.

Hence it appears there is a wide difference
between God's Covenanting with his Crea-
tures, and their Covenanting one with the o-
ther : The Creature has nothing he can strict-
ly speaking call his own. His Being, Powers,
Substance, his All is God's *Property* meerly lent
him or intrusted with him, the original *Pro-
prietor* still retaining his *Right* : So that it is
an act of great Condescension in God to treat
with any of his Creatures, how exalted soever,
on the Terms of a Covenant ; he might demand
all in the Sovereign Language of a Law, nor is
there any room for Stipulations with him, who
holds our Souls in Life, and gives us every
Blessing we possess.

In the sacred Scriptures, we are inform'd of
two Covenants, one made with Adam as the
Representative of all his Posterity; the other
with our Lord Jesus Christ as the Head of the
Elect or the Church, his Mystical Body. The
former is generally called a Covenant of Works,
the Terms of it being *Do this and Live* ; the
other a Covenant of Grace, as it flows from
the good Pleasure of God, every Blessing of
it is convey'd in a way of Sovereignty, and
the design of the whole is to exalt the Riches
of his Grace.

The Covenant of Works Man broke by his
Rebellion against his Maker, and involved
him-

himself and all represented by him, in the Penalty due to that Violation, † *Judgment came upon all Men unto Condemnation by the Disobedience of that first Man*: And ever since the Law is become *Weak thro' the Flesh*, as to a possibility of any Man's being justified by it: God having concluded all under Sin, therefore as the Apostle observes * *by the Works of the Law no Flesh can be justified in his Sight*.

This being foreseen by him, who by one intuitive View beholds what is past, present and to come; Mercy engaged the Divine Wisdom to fix on an expedient to recover some from the Ruins of the Fall: And tho' it may ever remain a Mystery beyond our Comprehension, that Man should be taken, and Angels left; it is matter of Joyful Surprise that *so it is*. The Determination pass'd, *Deliver them from going down into the Pit, I have found a Ransom*.

For which gracious Purpose, there were Covenant Transactions, between the Eternal Three, which from the Event, as well as Revelation, we learn were to this Effect.

The Father engaged to Pardon, Justify, and Glorify all who should be redeemed by the Son, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit; that the Son should have *a Seed to Serve him, see of the Travel of his Soul and be satisfied*, and in consequence of his Humiliation, *be highly Exalted, have a Name above every Name; be*

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† Rom. 5. 18. * Rom. 3. 20.

10 *The Unchangeableness of God's Covenant, a Prince and a Saviour, and that of his Dominion there should be no End.*

The Son engaged he would become Incarnate, take the *Body prepared for him* by his Father, and *do all his Will*, that he would stand in the place of all who were chosen unto eternal Life, obey and magnifie the Law, be made Sin for them, and bare the Curse due to their Transgressions. That he would work out Salvation, and obtain compleat Redemption for them

And tho' the Holy *Spirit's* Engagements are not so frequently insisted on, it is certain from the Glory of his Person, as Co-essential with the Father and Son, and the Province he attends in the great Blessing of Salvation, that he undertook to call, and renew, sanctify, guide, comfort and preserve, all who were Ordained to eternal Life by the Father, and redeemed by the Blood of the Son.

The great Mediator and Surety of this Covenant is *Emmanuel*, God and Man, and thus duly qualified to interpose between the angry Judge and Hell-deserving Criminal, thoroughly acquainted with all the Rights of the Father, and the Distress and Poverty of the Creature; equally zealous for the Glory of the One, as Compassionately concerned for the Happiness of the other.

And as a most Gracious Mediator, He does not only take away the matter of Controversy, but

but engages for the Continuance of Friendship. On the Fathers part that every promise shall be fulfilled; and on the behalf of his People, that he will make them Holy, and that the Fruits of Righteousness shall appear in them to the Glory of God; and that when he has compleated a Work of Grace in them, he will present them to him a Glorious Church, not having Spot or Wrinkle or any such Thing.

Saints are no otherways Parties in this Covenant, but as under their Head and Surety, in whom they are blessed with all Spiritual Blessings, whose Spirit is sent into their Hearts to take away the Stone out of them, and make them Hearts of Flesh, to put a filial fear of God into them, and write the Law of the Lord in their inward Man, and the *Hold* which Christ their Covenant Head has of them is their *Security*, that they shall not be left *Fully*, or *Finally*, to forsake the Lord.

David appears to have had a distinct Knowledge of this Covenant, and in the view of Death, breaks out in an holy triumph, * *Although my House be not so with God: Yet he hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my Salvation, and all my Desire, although he make it not to grow.*

And the invaluable Blessings contained in it are sweetly unfolded, among other inspired Writers, by the Prophets *Jeremiah* and *Eze-*

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* 2 Sam. 23. 5.

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kiel in the Old Testament, and the Apostle Paul in the New; the Prophet *Jeremiah* gives this account of it, * *Bekold the Days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Izrael and the House of Judah, not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers in the Day that I took them by the Hand to bring them out of the Land of Egypt; which my Covenant they brake although I was an Husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House of Izrael, after those Days, saith the Lord, I will put my Laws in their inward Parts, and Write it in their Hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my People. And they shall teach every Man, &c. for I will forgive their Iniquity and I will remember their Sin no more.* And in the next Chapter it is declared of the same Persons, † *They shall be my People, and I will be their God, and I will make an everlasting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my Fear in their Hearts, that they shall not depart from me.*

The Prophet *Ezekiel* brings much the same report. || *Thus saith the Lord, &c. I will give them one Heart, and put a new Spirit within you: And I will take the Stony Heart out of their Flesh, and will give them an Heart of Flesh, that they may walk in my Statutes and keep*

* Jer. 31. 31. 2, 3. † chap. 32. 38, 40.

|| Ezek. 11. 17, 19, 20.

keep my Ordinances and do them, and they shall be my People and I will be their God.

The first of these is quoted by the Apostle Paul, if he was the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, in the Eighth Chapter, from the 8th to the 13th verse, with very small Variation; where he * also calls it *a new Covenant, and a † better Covenant established upon better Promises*. And in his Epistle to the Galatians, he speaks of it as || *The Covenant confirm'd of God in Christ*; which contains a very clear Representation of the *Author, Mediator, and Security* of it.

Which leads us to consider how it may be said to be God's Covenant, for thus the Scripture always represents it, § *My Covenant shall stand fast with him*, speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, typified by *David*; and again, *My Covenant will I not break*, and elsewhere, *He is ever mindful of His Covenant*.

And it may well go under this Denomination, as it is

The Contrivance of his Wisdom, and
The Settlement of his Will.

1st. The Contrivance of his Wisdom.

Wisdom, we all know, discovers itself in the *Ends* we propose, and the *Means* we make use of, and in our diligence and steadiness in the Pursuit of those Means. And in proportion to Indowments or Situation, the Ends propos'd should

* Heb. 8. 13. † Heb. 8. || Gal. 3. 17.

§ Psalm, 89. 28, 34. Psalm 111. 5.

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should be more Excellent and Noble ; thus it would be base in the Supreme Magistratē to look no higher than a Peasant or a Tradesman ; what would be Commendable in the one, would be Mean and Contemptible in the other.

When we speak of the Wisdom of God, therefore as display'd in this Covenant, we intend by it that God propos'd the highest End, the Manifestation of the Glory of his own Perfections, and in this amazing Scheme fixed on the best Means to bring about this End.

Would he be known in the Glory of his Sovereignty as a God who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy ? Here is a Covenant of Grace to secure the Salvation of the *Redeemed from among Men of every Kindred, Tongue and Nation*, whilst Fallen Angels are reserved in Chains, doomed to everlasting Destruction.

Is he Glorious in Holiness ? And would have the World know that Sin is the abominable Evil which his Soul hates ? Where have we such an Exhibition of his Resentment against it, as in the Sufferings of his Son ? His near Relation to the Father, the Innocency of his Person, and the infinite Delight he took in him, as always doing the things which were pleasing to him, hinder not the *Fierceness* of his *Wrath* breaking out upon him when charged with the guilt of his People, and called to make
satis-

satisfaction for their Sins. The Father puts the Cup into the Hands of his *own* Son, and Drink it he must according to Covenant Settlements.

Nor have we, or perhaps can we have such another discovery that God is *Love*, as in the gift of his *Son*, *Himself*, and *all the Blessings of this Covenant* to poor worthless, guilty, perishing Sinners, so that we may well say herein he has set before us *his manifold Wisdom*, in the most amiable, and striking Light; and it is because of the blindness of Men's Eyes, that they see not more of the Glory of God, in the Face of Christ the great Head of this Covenant, than in all his Works besides.

And if the choice of proper *Means* be an Evidence of Wisdom, here we have it with the utmost Glory. Who so proper to be intrusted as the Man his Fellow, One mighty to save? Who would be so faithful to him as his own Son? Who so able to contend with the Powers of Darkness? And who so proper to receive the Glory of the united praise of the redeemed; as he who has the adorable Perfections of the Father, and whose delights were with the Sons of Men?

And as it was the Contrivance of his Wisdom, it is,

2d, The Settlement of his Will.

What God *might do* is not for us to enter into; but what he *will do* he has revealed; and
now

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now it is the *Statute Law* of Heaven concerning the Mediator of the New Covenant, *That other Foundation can no Man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus; nor is there Salvation in any other, nor any other Name given under Heaven whereby we can be sav'd. Him hath God set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood: And by him all who believe are Justified from all those things from which they could not be Justified by the Law of Moses;* so that besides the utter impossibility of Justification any other way from the Circumstances of the Sinner, It would be an high Affront to the Authority and Wisdom of God after he has declared himself upon the Head, to attempt it. But to proceed,

It is a Covenant of *Peace*, yea of *God's Peace*, *the Covenant of my Peace shall not be removed.* Peace in the Language of the Jews comprised all Good, hence it was so commonly made use of by them, in their most affectionate Wishes or Salutations. In the New Testament it is used sometimes for *Reconciliation*, thus we have *Peace with God thro' Jesus Christ*, he is *our Peace*, in other Instances for Peace of Conscience; this is a Blessing of the sweetest import as the former is of the greatest Consequence, and both are contained in this Covenant, God declares himself reconciled, and a believing Application to this Covenant is the best means of introducing solid Peace into the Soul, when
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weary and heavy laden with a sense of Sin : Nor is there any good of a spiritual or temporal Nature which can be supposed to be contained in the Term *Peace* but is provided for here, for *it has pleased the Father*, that in the Head of the Covenant, *all Fulness should dwell*, that *from his Fulness* we might receive, and Grace for Grace ; and we may rest satisfied in the Promises of this Covenant, * *He who spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all Things?* † *Yea, that all Things shall work together for good to those who love God, and are called according to his Purpose.*

And when it is Emphatically said the Covenant of *my Peace* ; The Blessing is reserved in the Hand of God, to give out to whom, and in what Measure he pleases. Which brings me

II. To the Spring or Source of this Covenant, *Kindness and Mercy.*

My Kindness shall not depart from thee, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.

The two principal Ideas in these Terms are, *Sovereignty*, which is absolute and *Distinguishing* ; and *Favour*, with the most *indearing Affection* : Mercy and Merit is a Contradiction in Terms ; and whether the Pride of Man will bow to it or spurn at it, the Language of God in the dispensing of Mercy always is, *I Will* ; and shall we say it ought to be otherwise ? When we consider the infinite

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* Rom. 8. 38.

† ver. 28, *ibid.*

18 *The Unchangeableness of God's Covenant,*
Glory of his Majesty; the meanness of his
Creatures when compared with him; the vile-
ness of Sinners: That this great King is above
all Obligation, and were it not so, Rebels of all
others could not make the least Pretension to
it; surely then he may do what he will with
his own. We are all of us tender enough as to
the disposing of what we call our Property, who
will bare with any degree of Patience a Chal-
lenge on this Head? We are Quick-sighted to
distinguish between a *Petition* and a *Demand*,
and where we are in some Instances disposed to
give, we refuse, when a sort of claim is laid,
to convince the Addressor, of the difference
between a *Debt* and a *Bounty*.

And yet it is no more strange than true, that
Man has not a greater quarrel with his Maker,
than when he comes forth in the display of
distinguishing Mercy; the Apostle met with
some of these in his Day, to whom he says,
* *Nay, but O Man, who art thou that repliest
against God, shall the thing formed say to him who
formed it, why has thou made me thus! Hath
not the Potter power over the Clay, &c.* And
he introduces a Case that might seem the most
exceptionable as to *Jacob* and *Esau*, and con-
cludes, *Is there any Unrightousness with God?*
*God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have
Mercy on whom I will have Mercy; and I will
have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion;*
so then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that
run-

* Rom. 9. 20, 21.

runneth, but of God who sheweth Mercy. I cannot, but think after so Judicious and Pathetic a Vindication of the Divine Sovereignty; to say nothing that the Apostle was *Inspired*, for any who pretend the least Veneration for his Reasoning to be perpetually Quarreling with it, is an Inconsistency, chargeable with much more Absurdity, than they can possibly impute to the Doctrine itself. But to bring the matter home to ourselves, have any of us comfortable reason to conclude our Interest in this Covenant? considering what we once were, how many under the same Means continue strangers to God and themselves, and how Glorious the Priviledges are which it contains, must not we cry out *Grace, Grace*, and adore the Sovereignty of him who when he might justly have left us to perish, *said unto us, Live?*

Which brings me to the other Idea, of *Favour*, with the most indearing *Affection*, couched in the Word *Kindness*.

And if we consider what God has parted with, what he lays out upon, how he sides with, and what he has laid up for his People, we shall soon discover the Propriety of the Term.

Kindness is more than to spare and to pardon, great Mercies as they are: It is to take into favour, to use well, to bestow Blessings. And what greater than God's Eternal Son and the Holy Spirit? What more ennobling than

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the Divine Image? What so Entertaining as his Love shed abroad in the Soul? What so great a support as his everlasting Arm? What Enemy shall prevail whilst he takes part with us? Is there an honour like being a Child of God, an Heir, yea Joint-Heir with Christ? Who but the Saint with a God in Covenant smiling upon him, can meet Death with Pleasure? And if the inexhaustible Treasures within the Vail can enrich the Believer, they are all made over in this Covenant to constitute and complete his Happiness.

It may well be called Kindness, behold what manner of Love is this, look Saints, yea look again, and again: Wonder, and adore, surely your God is *Love*. But it's time to proceed to the next General.

III. The solemn Assurance we have, of the Stability, Perpetuity, and Unchangeableness of this Covenant, *My Kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my Peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath Mercy on thee.* This is the spiritual Glory of this Covenant it cannot be disannulled. The God whose Covenant it is, is possessed of supreme Authority, incontrollable Power, and unchanging Faithfulness; now his Resolution is, *my Kindness shall not depart.*

And has he not a right to determine in this Matter, who is Lord of all? May he not draw
out

out a Scheme to glorify his own Perfections in what way he will? Shall any dare to say to this Glorious Majesty, what dost thou? And can it enter into the Thoughts of Men, when God has set his Heart upon any thing, he should want Means to accomplish it? Or is he a Capricious Being like a Man, that he should lie, or the Son of Man that he should repent? No, his Counsel shall stand, and he will do all his Pleasure.

To say he is surprized with new Events, and not sufficiently provided for them, is Blasphemy; as it is to imagine that the Father of Lights should be variable, or have the least shadow of turning.

You observe the Language is peremptory, and without Conditions, *it shall not depart.*

That Saints deserve to be turned out of Covenant for their Backslidings, and non-improvement of Mercies, is not denyed; they themselves are the first to acknowledge it: And sometimes in an Hour of Darkness and Temptation, their Fears may run high from a Sense of their unworthiness that this may be the Case: But God has graciously determined the matter in their favour, *If they forsake his Law, and walk not in his Judgments; If they break his Statutes and keep not his Commandments: He will visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes; nevertheless says he, my Loving-kindness will I not*
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utterly take from him, (their Head, and there-
fore not from them his Members) nor suffer
my faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not
break, nor alter the thing that's gone out of my
Mouth : And for greater Security, if greater
can be desired, it is added, Once have I sworn
** by my Holiness, that I will not lie unto David.*

Now if we compare this with the Apostles
account of an Oath, That it is for Confirmation
and to put an end to all Strife; and attend to
what he observes in this very Case; we may
adore the Grace of God that he † being wil-
ling more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of
Promise, the immutability of his Counsel, confirm'd
it by an Oath : That by two immutable things in
which it was impossible for God to lie, we might
have strong Consolation, who have fled for re-
fuge to lay hold on the Hope set before us.

So that we have the Promise and Oath of
the God of Truth, that this Covenant shall
not be broke, nor can any reason be assigned
of greater force to engage God to turn his
People out of Covenant, than there was against
his taking them into it; nothing but Grace,
mere Grace, could incline him to look on them,
and take them into Covenant, when cast out
to the loathing of their Persons, guilty and
unclean; And there is the highest reason to
conclude the same Grace will secure their in-
terest in it, and convey all needful blessings,
till the great End of the Covenant is answered,

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* Psalm 89. 30, 1, 2, 3, 4.

† Heb. 6. 17, 18.

The Glory of God in their compleat Salvation.

Moreover, this Covenant being ratified by the Blood of Jesus, receives a testamentary Form; and we may conclude with the Apostle, that though it is but a Man's Covenant or Testament, as the Word signifies, if it be confirmed, no Man disannulleth, or added thereto. And if where there is a Testament there must of necessity be the Death of the Testator, in order to give strength or force to the Testament; Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, laid down his Life, that they which are called, might receive the Promise of the Eternal Inheritance.

The purport of Christs *Will* or Testament you have in his last Prayer, that God would sanctify his People, and keep them, and he closes it in the very Terms of a Testament, * *Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my Glory.* Now if it were only a Son asking a favour of his Father, it were some encouragement to hope well of the Success: But when we think of the Glory of his Person, the Honour he brought to God, and his performance of the *Conditions* on which this Blessing was suspended, and which the Father solemnly stipulated to give him to his entire Satisfaction upon his fulfilling of them; We have all the Assurance we can have, that he was heard, and that according to the Covenant, God will give Grace, and
Glory

* John 17. 24.

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Glory; and withhold no good thing from all
his Members whom he gave unto him, and
who are enabled to walk uprightly.

And as it is an unchangeable, so it is an
everlasting Covenant, carrying the Believer
through all the Stages of Life, and introducing
him into all the Glories of the Heavenly World.

In the Execution of this Design, the Heart
of God will rest for ever: And the Saint will
be employ'd in the Contemplation of the Wis-
dom, Love, and Faithfulness of a God in Co-
venant, through the endless Ages of Eternity;
which brings me,

IV. To the Amplification or Illustration of
the Security of this Covenant. *For this is as
the Waters of Noah unto me; for as I have
sworn that the Waters of Noah should no more
go over the Earth; so have I sworn that I
would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee.
For the Mountains shall depart, and the Hills
be removed, but my Kindness shall not depart
from thee, &c.*

In the former Words there is a Reference to
that universal Deluge, which in the Days of
Noah, destroyed the Inhabitants of the Earth,
himself and Family excepted, concerning which
most awful Desolution, God promised it should
never more take place as it had then done, and
in the Text there is an Appeal to the Experience
of all preceding Ages, whether God had remem-
bered and fulfilled this Covenant or no? The
Sea

Sea had sometimes overflowed its Bounds, and Land-floods destroyed much Corn and People, but no universal Flood; well, says God, have I been true to my Covenant with *Noah*? I have as truly, and strongly bound myself to you in this Covenant of Grace: Did I swear unto him? You also have my Oath; And my Glory is as much concerned in the one, as in the other. In the latter Instance God calls upon his People to look on the Hills and the several Ranges of the loftiest Mountains; these may seem to bid fair for continuance, but they *may depart*, and in course of Ages moulder away, or be overturned by Earthquakes; and if they escape these, yet in the great Conflagration they shall be burnt up, but says God, *my Kindness shall not depart*, &c. In this we see his great Condescension to Reason with us in our own way, otherwise surely it had been enough that the Mouth of the Lord had pronounced the Fact, without any additional Securities.

If any should object, this leads to Licentiousness, and encourages Indolence and Carelessness; We reply, the unconverted Sinner has no Scriptural Evidence of his Interest in this Covenant, till he feels the Blessings of it writ upon his Heart: He cannot say, the Lord is his God, whilst he is destitute of his Fear: And supposing the Saint to have the least degree of Gratitude, what so likely to inflame his Love to God, inspire him with Zeal for

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his Glory, and excite him to a chearful and steady Obedience, as a comfortable perswasion of an Interest in his Favour? That the Lord is his God, and will be so for ever and ever.

The Believer well knows the Consistence between Diligence in the use of appointed Means, and Faith in the Wisdom, and Power of God, to secure the Event.

It remains that we make some Application.

I. Let each of us inquire, with the utmost strictness and care, into the Evidences we have, of our Interest in this Covenant of Grace: this being all our Salvation, we had need look well to it that we are not deceived by resting in Appearances, and taking up with the Shadow, whilst we miss the Substance.

It is not what our Parents may have done by Prayer and solemn Dedication for us, nor in what Denomination of Professors we have entered ourselves; no, nor what Doctrinal Principles we may be generally acquainted with; but what God has done *in us*, and *for us*, that ought to give us Satisfaction; has he opened our Eyes to see how guilty and vile we are by Nature and Practice? shewn us the Plague of our Hearts? Made us humble our Souls before him, and loath ourselves in our own Sight? Has he softened our obdurate Spirits, and engaged us with Evangelical Contrition

tion to look on him whom we have pierced, and to mourn? Have we been led to Jesus as the great Hope? And know what it is to commit our Souls into his Hand? Have we renounced our own Righteousness, and built all our hopes of Pardon and Acceptance on the Merit of his Blood and Righteousness? Have we seen the Beauties of Holiness, and tasted the Pleasure of Communion with God? Do we desire to live in his Fear and aim at his Glory? These are comfortable Indications, that he has made with us in Christ an Everlasting Covenant.

II. Saints, should you not humble your Souls before God, that you have been so unsteadfast in his Covenant?

God is faithful, by whom you are called into the Fellowship of his Son; where he has begun the good Work he will carry it on; nor does he ever leave or forsake his People; but, alas, how treacherous are the Hearts of the best towards him! How ready to forget the most solemn Professions, and turn their Back on him on every Occasion!

Shall not his unchangeable Love, and Covenant Faithfulness upbraid us with our Inconstancy? And make us lie in the Dust before the Lord for our Baseness and Ingratitude? Surely we ought to say in an Hour of Temptation, how shall we forsake the Fountain of

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Living Waters: does the Lord always remember his Covenant with us, and shall we ungratefully provoke him by turning aside from the Path of his Commandments?

III. It is the Glory of the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, that the Covenant of which he is the Head, secures the Blessing of Salvation unto all who are interested in it.

This, we know, was not the Case with the first Adam, nor could be with any meer Creature. A finite changeable Being is always subject to fall, but as God upholds him; the most that can be said of Adam was, that he had power to stand, but when the Matter came to Trial, being left to the freedom of his Will, he apostatized from God, and lost the Life he was intrusted with for himself and Posterity. But Christ came that his People might have *Life*, and in his Covenant Transactions he stipulated not for a *Possibility* of *Salvation* only, but for the *assured Possession* of the Blessing in all its Compass and Glory.

IV. Saints see here, what is to be your Support and Comfort in a dying Hour: The great Promise of your Covenant Head belongs to you, *because I Live, ye shall Live also.*

You will probably have many things to reflect on with uneasiness, with respect to Frame and Conduct, when you come to Survey, how
you

you have lived with, and for God, since you first made a Profession. And if the Tempter should be suffered to Assault you, how will you come at solid Peace, but by laying hold of this Covenant? Death will shake us out of our Carnal Confidences, and dreadfully affright us, but as we are assisted to lay hold of him, *who by his own Death has destroyed him who had the Power of Death.*

This was the great Mercy of our honoured deceased Friend, his Soul cleaved to God's Covenant and rested his All upon it, which he mentioned as the great Spring of those Hopes which in the prospect of Death made him Calm and Easy.

As to his Character,

He appeared to be a plain, honest, upright Man, open and without Disguise, to be trusted and depended on, being steady and prudent in the main of his Conduct.

He had a rich Experience of the Grace of God, and discovered a visible Pleasure in conversing about sacred Things. And as far as I have heard, was enabled to adorn the Doctrine of God his Saviour, by an holy and humble Conversation.

He was distinguished for a good Gift in Prayer, so that he was much taken notice of whilst he was a private Member, for his *Judgment, Faith, and Affection*

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on in calling upon the Name of God. This led some to think he might have an Aptness to Teach, which by degrees was discovered much to their Satisfaction, in some private Conferences for mutual Edification; at which, after earnest Prayer and several Days Meditation on the Words proposed; he was prevailed with to speak from some Passages of Scripture, and assisted to do it pertinently and spiritually. A Report of this being made to the Church, he was called by them to Exercise his Gift privately, which he did for several Months; Prayer being made to God continually for his Assistance, and their Direction.

At length the Church being satisfied that he had a Gift, which promised some Usefulness under a Divine Blessing; Set apart a time to give him a Call to the Exercise of it, which was done with great Unanimity and Joy.

After this he preached Occasionally among the Churches, and as far as I have heard, was well accepted, *as a Workman rightly dividing the Word of Truth*; but he was not long engaged in this Service before you invited him first to Assist you, and then to Join your present honoured Pastor * in the Care and Oversight of you; to which Service he was solemnly set apart by Prayer and Imposition of Hands.

How he acquitted himself among you, you best know; and I am persuaded it was with so much honour, that there is not a Member of

* The Rev. Mr. David Rees.

of the Church, but laments the Removal of him, as of a Faithful, Affectionate, Laborious Servant of the Lord.

He had a great Zeal for the Important Doctrines of the Gospel, and for his Time, had a clear Insight into the Mysteries of the Kingdom; his Sermons, for he shewed me many of them, were as far as I am a Judge Methodical and Instructive; his Address to Sinners pathetic, and his Reasoning with Saints strong and nervous.

God honoured him with several Seals to his Ministry, so that we were ready to promise ourselves great Usefulness had he been longer continued: But the great Shepherd thought fit to cut short his Work in Righteousness and Assign him his Reward.

One thing I cannot omit, he had a deep concern of Spirit for the Order and Discipline of God's House, did all he could to promote it, and was much grieved where he failed of Success. He often expressed the Apprehension he was under of the dangerous Consequences of breaking down the Hedge, and laying all things Common; well knowing a Pretence of the most extensive Charity, is no excuse for annulling or corrupting the great Ordinances of the Gospel.

His Sickness was rather lingring than painful; a little slow Fever brought on a general Weakness, which gradually brought him to the Grave.

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He had great Supports, and his Faith and Hope in lively Exercise, during the greatest part of his Illness; his Language was very Spiritual and Comfortable, to all who visited him.

He told me his Soul was fix'd on the Rock Christ, "and rested in the Covenant": And in the midst of Prayer put up on his Account, he broke out with an audible Voice, "*O That is Glorious*" referring to the Righteousness of Christ; and added, "there is my *Rest and Hope*".

He was somewhat desirous of Life, had it been the Will of God; nor are we to wonder at it: He was in the Bloom of Life, lately placed in a very honourable Station, and engaged in a Work his Soul took great delight in; and which no doubt had a considerable weight with him, Providence had but just given him a most suitable Companion, who with her excellent Father, studied to make his Life every way agreeable. These and other Reasons might sometimes make him wish to stay; but with great Resignation to the Divine Will, he threw himself into the Hands of God, to do with him as he pleased.

He had some flattering Symptoms, common in his Case, which gave his Friends hope; but at length Death, the Believers Friend, did his Office, and he breathed out his Spirit into the Hands of his Redeemer; may the awful Providence be greatly sanctified!

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You his sorrowing Relations are called to see the Hand of God, to hear the Voice of the Rod, and to humble your Souls before him; he has made this Breach upon you; beg Grace to lay it to Heart, and to go forth and meet him, saying, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, for we have sinned against thee!* He can easily make up the Loss, and if you have the Scripture Evidence, of an Interest in the Covenant, you may plead the Promises suited to your Circumstances; let the Widow look to him who has said, * *Fear not for thy Maker is thine Husband*, and let her trust in him for Help and Defence.

Let sorrowing Parents remember, *Who* has engaged to give his People a Name better than that of Sons and Daughters; And may every Relation find it a very useful and teaching Dispensation.

And surely, my Honoured Friends, the Members of this Church, you must I think see the Hand of the Lord upon you; To have one Pastor confin'd by a painful Disorder, so as to be almost *Dead* to you, as to a Capacity of Service, for several Years; and to have another just raised up, bless'd a little, and then suddenly called Home: It would be a very bad Sign indeed if these things made no Impression upon you. As the Lord shall help you inquire carefully what may have provoked him, take care of Drowsiness and Barrenness, lest he

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should

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should proceed to further Severities, stir up one another to Prayer, and intreat the Holy Spirit to enable you wisely to improve the Means the Lord may yet provide for you: Remember him who lately had in part the oversight of you, and endeavour to be Followers of him in Faith, Zeal, and Holiness, as far as he was a Follower of Christ.

And forgive my dear Brethren the Freedom, when I say, what if you were to be more instant as a Church in Prayer for your present excellent Pastor; who knows but the Lord might restore him and make him a remarkable Blessing among you?

I have only to add God grant we may all carry about with us a sense of our Frailty; Dying Work will be our Work 'ere long: The Lord prepare us for it! Whatever we may think in Health; of Riches, Honour, and Pleasure: A Covenant God, an Interest in Jesus, and an Hope of Glory, will be the great Cordials to our fainting Spirits, when we are called to look into Eternity, and meet our Judge.

Happy Man who believing in Jesus, daily converses with God, grows more like him, who in the realizing Views of the Glories of Heaven, is indifferent to the things of Time and Sense! He may lay down his Head in Peace,
and

and trust his Father, that he will make good his Promise, tho' *the Mountains may depart and the Hills be removed, my Kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the Covenant of my Peace be removed; saith the Lord, who hath Mercy on thee.*

F I N I S.

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